

REMARKS

The foregoing amendment amends claim 1, cancels claims 7 and 11-37 and adds claims 38-48. Pending in the application are claims 1-6, 8-10 and 38-48, of which claims 1 and 40 are independent. The following comments address all stated grounds for rejection and place the presently pending claims, as identified above, in condition for allowance.

Claim 1 is amended to include the subject matter of original claim 7. Claim 1 now specifies that the tab portion of the connector includes an outer surface that is *inclined* relative to a longitudinal axis of the connector, and that the outer surface is configured to abut an inclined surface of the filter plate.

Dependent claim 38 depends from claim 1 and further recites that the collar portion is attached to a central opening of a filter cloth, as originally recited in claims 11, 16 and 36. Dependent claim 39 depends from claim 1 and further recites that the collar portion is forms an annular opening that is larger than an opening of a filter plate to which the connector is attached, as originally recited in claim 31.

New independent claim 40 corresponds to the subject matter of original claim 10, rewritten in independent form. The Examiner considered claim 10 to be patentable over the cited prior art.

New claims 41-48 depend from claim 40 and recite the subject matter of original claims 2-8, and 31 respectively. *No new matter is added.*

Amendment and/or cancellation of the claims is not to be construed as an acquiescence to any of the objections/rejections set forth in the instant Office Action, and was done solely to expedite prosecution of the application. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the claims as originally filed, or similar claims, in this or one or more subsequent patent applications.

Claim Rejections Under 35 USC § 102

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the close review of the claims and for indicating that claim 10 recites patentable subject matter. In the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 1-9

under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by FR Patent Number 1,593,016 (the FR '016 reference). Applicant respectfully submits that all pending claims distinguish patentably over the FR '016 reference.

The present invention is directed to an improved system and method for attaching filter cloths to filter plates. As recognized, by the Examiner, the prior art does not teach or suggest a connector ring including a tab portion having third and fourth surfaces intersecting to form a point at the end of the connector, as recited in claim 10. Independent claim 40 now recites this feature and is therefore immediately allowable. Because claim 40 is allowable, dependent claims 41-48 are also in immediate condition for allowance.

Independent claim 1 is directed to a connector for attaching a filter media to a filter plate that includes an *inclined* outer surface on a tab portion configured to abut an inclined surface of a filter plate.

According to the Examiner, because the FR '016 reference shows surfaces on the "connectors" and filter plate that extend at a right angle to a longitudinal axis, the claims are anticipated. Applicant respectfully submits that the term "inclined" refers to an angle that is neither parallel nor perpendicular to a reference direction. Figures 4, 6, 7 and 10 clearly show the inclined configuration of the tab portion outer surface 426 or 866 relative to the axis A-A according to the illustrative embodiments of the invention. The use of abutting inclined surfaces on the connector and the filter plate facilitates a secure and sealing connection between the filter cloth and the filter plate. In contrast, all surfaces on the assembly devices and filter plates shown and described in the FR '016 reference extend either parallel or perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the central hole 2. The FR '016 reference does not teach or suggest that any surface of the assembly elements 7 and 8 in Figure 1, elements 15 and 16 in Figure 2, elements 21 and 22 in Figure 3, or elements 28 and 29 in Figure 4 can extend at an incline and/or be configured to abut an inclined surface of a filter plate. Therefore, claims 1-10 are patentable over the cited prior art.

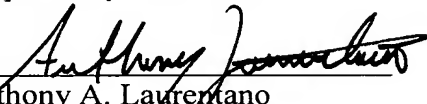
CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendment, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue. If, however, the Examiner considers that obstacles to allowance of these claims persist, we invite a telephone call to Applicant's representative.

Applicant believes no fee is due with this statement. However, if a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 12-0080, under Order No. MIN-006 from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 
Anthony A. Laurentano
Registration No. 38,220
LAHIVE & COCKFIELD, LLP
28 State Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02109
(617) 227-7400
(617) 742-4214 (Fax)
Attorney For Applicant